



Dear family and friends,

Our premier issue of **La Vigna** met with much enthusiasm. We received compliments from as far away as California, as well as many from the home front. The publication of our first **La Vigna** was a great group effort--without people working together it could never have been done. We will nourish and expand this group effort for the continued success of our paper. You can help us by sending us your family news and family recollections. By hearing from all of you we can learn more about each other. Those of you who don't like to write can make notes and get in touch with us for help in writing. If cooperation is unlimited, then our success will have no limits.

How much material we have, time and staff available determine the length of each issue, so at times space will be limited and we may need to edit articles. We will get in touch with the writer before making any changes.

Our next issue will come to you in early summer. If you know of someone who would like to receive **La Vigna**, let us know.

Enjoy the spring and have a happy Easter.

Affettuosamente,

Corinne Bilancio & Staff @

***** **Deadline for the July 4th issue is June 1** *****

FAMILY ARMS RACE

The Homemade Tube-Tire Guns

By Anthony Chianese

Looking back over some long-ago memories of life growing up, Tony Chianese tells this story of what it was like as youngster competing for turf with his brothers and cousins Bilancio--Lewis, Luigi and Ralph:

What I remember most clearly about the days when we were kids is a time when we all had home-made tube-tire guns. We had created ammunition by slicing rubber tubes into rubber bands that we could stretch onto our wooden guns and release with a flick of the thumb or finger. Our battles took place in the storage room above the barn that was attached to the baker shop at 48 Bayard St--my father's bakery. The battles were usually fought with various combinations of sides: between me (Tony); my brothers, Joe, Pat, and Leo; Lewis Bilancio (Lewie-Stiff); Luigi Bilancio (Zi Prevete) and his brother Ralph.

All our arms were single-shot rubber tube guns. One day Lewie Stiff got the bright idea of creating a two-shot pistol. He had a clear upper hand in the games at that point. Not to (Cont. pg. 2)

Letters to the Editor

Dear Corinne Bilancio and
La Vigna staff,

My husband and I were absolutely thrilled to receive the premier issue of **La Vigna**. It's a great beginning of a tradition!

We'd like to contribute any way we can. We can supply you with whatever you may need. Please give us a call and let us know however we can help you on this end.

Good luck and keep "La Vigna" alive.

Sincerely,

Mary Lynn Chianese Nazzaro and
Daniel P. Nazzaro
QUAKERBRIDGE OFFICE SUPPLY

Dear Corinne:

What a pleasant and beautiful surprise to receive the premier issue of the newsletter "La Vigna". It's one great piece of art! Thoroughly enjoyed reading every article. We are looking forward to your next issue with much anticipation--knowing we will read all the welcome news of our relatives--How neat!

Thank you so much for remembering us--we really appreciate it.,

Frank & Connie Picascia
Vista, California
(Connie is the daughter of Matilda Bartaleone)

THE EPICUREAN CLUB

By Clarinda (Lucy) Gervasio

While leafing through an old photograph album recently, I found a page of black and white photos which was covered with pictures from a trip to Washington, D.C., that was taken by the Epicurean Club in the summer of 1935. The people smiled proudly as they posed in their stylish outfits. There was a vibrant quality in these photos which seemed to express the dynamnics of the situation. The individuals in these pictures were Lewis, Rose and Jennie, Louis and Mary Bilancio, Leo Chianese, Grace Criscio and Rose Patterson, all betwen 17-19 years of age and orginal members of the club. Except for Grace and Rose Patterson, the others were all related.

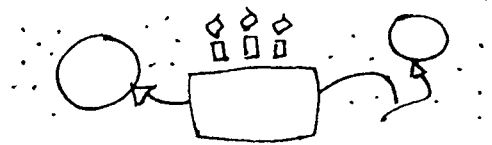
My own memories of the day of the trip are somewhat patchy since I was only 6 at the time. Nevertheless, I do remember my brother Louis and sister Mary selling chocolate brazil nuts and "Grade A" penny candy to help raise money for the occasion.

There was a general feeling of excitement in my house on the day of the trip and, although the younger ones of us could not go along, we made our own merriment. Cousins Leo and Sylvia (younger brother and sister of Lewis, Rose and Jennie) slept at our house and, like any normal 6,7,9 and 13 year olds we giggled, disobeyed and generally misbehaved instead of falling asleep at a reasonable hour. I awoke just before dawn the next morning to the sound of the milkman greeting Louis and Mary as they entered our house. As soon as they were inside, they began to review the outing. Mary started talking about the previous evening at Uncle Nick's, where Rose, Jennie, Grace and she had tried on hats and had laughed all evening. Grace, who lived next door, had to go home early that night. This had not stopped the girls, however. They had simply continued with a whispered conversation across the narrow yard for the rest of the night. They had been too excited to sleep.

Subsequently, Louis turned the dialogue to Washington where, according to him, all of the club members had "walked their feet off". Nonetheless, everyone on the trip had kept walking in order to see all they could. They had all felt that if they stopped, their marvelous day would end.

I have seen photographs of this event at various times during the years and each time one or

(Continued on Page 4)

**HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

April 19	Bobbi Wiesner
20	Joe Gervasio
24	Joe Garzio
27	Julianne Wiesner-Chianese (see her family portrait in this issue)
May 1	Willie Bilancio
11	Jacalyn Anthony
11	Pat Chianese
26	Chris Chianese
30	Brent Schutts
June 9	Jennie Immordino
13	Terri Klepzynski
18	Dominic Gervasio
19	Roberta Immordino
25	Paul Slavinka
26	Ira Giuseppe Roberts Bilancio (Ira is 1 yr old)
26	Claudia Schutts
30	Gary Chianese

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

May 24	Claudia & Brent Schutts
June 4	Robert & Susan Chianese
June 25	Lee & Fred Esposito

Arms Race (Continued)

be out-done, (and I know that Lewis and Luigi were always trying to get the advantage over one another), Luigi built a machine gun.

His invention had a barrel, a wheel with a crank handle and a set of notches into which he set not rubber tire slices, but elastic rubber bands. He was able to wipe out all the rest of us without having to re-load even once.

After Luigi proved his military superiority a number of times, Lewie-Stiff organized us into a kind of kamikazee Light Brigade. Ready, set, chaaarrge!!! Luigi saw us coming; he popped up, fired his machine gun shots in rapid succession and "mortally" wounded a number of us. We kept right on coming!

Luigi protested, "Hey, you guys are supposed to be out--I shot you!"

Poor Luigi, it was not to be so. We all continued to rush him. Smart alec machine gunner! I guess what they say is true about "all's fair in love and war."

Send news items, photos, articles, drawings or contributions by June 1 to:

LA VIGNA
90 Eggerts Road
Lawrenceville, NJ 08648

News From Ralph & Diane Garzio

Ralph will be graduated in May '84 as a Doctor of Optometry. Also, he just received a \$1,000 scholarship in March '84. Ralph and Diane hope to move and work in Bucks or Mercer County next year.

Ralph is a member of the National Honor Society and Contact Lens Society. They are both interested in doing therapeutic massage. Diane has become certified and is doing massage, for women mainly, in several locations. She also has two part time jobs in nursing.

NOTES FROM THE GARDEN"Go see your Grandpop"

Assunta Chianese Spring '78

by Fran Bilancio

In early March, 1979, my father Louis phoned me to ask if I would turn the earth at my 92 year old Grandpop's garden. He thought it would take a week and I could make \$50 while getting to know my Grandpop a little better. I said I'd think about it.

I wasn't too hot on the idea. Fifty bucks isn't much and I'd always heard what a hard man my "Grandpop Joe" was; so hard to please, so finnick, so mean. Who needs it?

Then again my Grandpop was that living legend: "The man of iron", social-political radical, health nut of the 20's and 30's; advocate of the working people; quit jobs because the pay was too high; allegedly believed "Money is the devils excrement"; the anti-materialist's antimaterialist. But above all, he was the master of that timeless, ageless, magical, mystical, mythical place known as **THE LOTS**: Nine thousand square feet of idealism and infinity.

A week later Dad again rang me. "It's up to you," he said. "Grandpop needs help." I remembered the time last summer when I had passed the gardens; weeds grew three and four feet tall in the northwest corner, the fences were falling; things were different. But there was my old grandpop working, working, working, shirtless in the August heat. I stopped the car for a moment and thought I'd get out and say hello. But no, I was busy and he hardly spoke English and I didn't understand Italian. I stepped on the gas. "Sure, Dad, I'll help."

"OK, then, I'm going to call Grandpop and tell him. Can you pick him up at home next Saturday?"

"Sure, Pop." I hung up and wondered "Why?"

I had been sent by my father to work in my grandfather's vineyards.

Next issue: "You gotta love this work"

EASTER IN ROME

by Corinne Bilancio

It was Easter the first time I was in Rome. At age seven my main impression was that somehow the Easter Bunny was missing. He did not appear in a single shop window or Easter card. Instead there were stuffed cats and dogs and huge chocolate eggs with surprises inside. Our cousin Carmelina Castaldi (sister to Mimi and Rosinella who have visited the States) gave me one of these luscious chocolate eggs on Easter Sunday and at that point I stopped worrying about the missing Easter bunny. Even though he was nowhere to be seen, I knew that he worked in mysterious ways.

When my father Lew Bilancio used to take groups to Europe on a regular basis at Easter-time, Easter Sunday would often be spent in Rome. Naturally some people wanted to see the Pope on Easter morning but getting the people there through all the crowds was no easy task. There was an electric trolley that went directly from their hotel, the Silva, to the Vatican, so Lew instructed the people how to go. But each trolley was so mobbed that only a few people could get on each one. Finally there were about six left, so Lew, who pitied these inexperienced travellers, decided to accompany them, even though he had other plans. In the middle of the trip the trolley suddenly stopped--the electricity had been shut off. Lew figured this was due to some strike or other which frequently interrupts transportation service in Italy. They got off the trolley and attempted to find a taxi. The taxis were filled, but luckily the trolley started up again. They made a mad dash and jumped on to the trolley.

When they finally arrived at the Vatican, they found that there were many policemen and barricades set up for crowd control. They went through a great maze to make their way to
(Continued on next page)

A FINANCIAL REPORT

We are happy that we have had more contributions to **La Vigna**! This will allow us to continue with plans and have our third edition in your mailbox by early summer.

Many thanks to the new contributors who have made this possible:

Anthony W. Chianese
Alfonso Bilancio
Julianne Wiesner-Chianese
Diane & Ralph Garzio
Willie & Terence Bilancio

Send letters to the editor
to:

Corinne Bilancio
324 North Delsea Dr.
Glassboro, NJ 08028

Epicurean Club (Continued)

another of the participants have been present, making remarks and answering my questions. From these times I have tried to piece the origin and development of the Epicurean Club.

It seems that the group was formed not too long before the trip. There was some argument over the name because it was felt that there might be some misinterpretation of the reason for the club's existence. After all, the members did not mean to promote the "eat, drink and be merry" philosophy. Yes, they meant to have fun, to live, joyfully, but they also wanted to engage in the appreciation of cultural endeavors. Hence, the Washington trip to see the Capitol of our country and all its landmarks. In fact, the trip seemed to be the nucleus around which the club was formed.

Later, as some of the original members left for school or other pursuits, new members joined. People such as Rosina and Irene Felice, Joseph Palermo, Frank Vizzini and Raymond Forer helped to expand the scope of the club and it developed over many years into a highly organized group around which many socio-cultural outings were planned.

(If you have any recollections of this group, please send them to us.)

FAMILY MAXIMS

An example of a family saying was one Erminia Martine would use as she was braiding the young Lorraine Bilancio Anthony's hair if Lorraine protested that it hurt: **"Chi bella vuo Pare molto pene adda pade."** "She who wants to look pretty many a pain endures."

Staff and Writers This Issue

Corinne Bilancio
Francis Bilancio
Angelica Roberts
Clothilda Montague
Rose Bilancio
Angelo Chianese
Anthony Chianese
Lorraine Anthony
Lucy Gervasio
Dean Acquaviva
Diane & Ralph Garzio
Lewis Bilancio

Easter in Rome (Continued)

their reserved space. On Easter the tradition is that those who come the farthest distance get to sit closest to the Pope, so this group of Americans had a space pretty close to the front. You can imagine that this crowded scene is a perfect spot for pickpockets. Lew notes that each Easter that he accompanied Americans to Rome (as many as 10 Easters) there was always one who got pickpocketed, even though he always warned them. This year one older lady held her handbag with both hands right in front of her, but in vain. A thief gave her a heavy kick right on her instep and when she lifted her hands in surprise, he made off with her wallet.

In the meantime Lew was concerned because he was expected for Easter dinner at Carmelina's. How could he get out when 100's of thousands of people were all trying to get in? He slipped into the Vatican's private quarters in search of a way out. One of those famous Swiss Guards stopped him, asking, "What are you doing here? Are you authorized?" Of course Lew was not, so the guard kicked him right out--just what Lew wanted. He had found the only easy way out of the Vatican on Easter Sunday.

Later, on their way to Carmelina's, Lew and Bernice Smailer stopped at the Spanish Steps which were covered with potted azaleas, as is the tradition at Easter in Rome. It was a beautiful sight--red, magenta and white flowers carpeting the steps which lead up to the pretty church S. Trinita dei Monti. This lovely view inspired them to buy some carnations to take to Carmelina. They stopped by a flower vendor, a woman about 35, pretty and vivacious, who pleasantly sold them the flowers. As they left, Bernice, whose knowledge of Italian was limited, wished the lady "buona Pasquale", meaning to say Happy Easter. The flower vendor laughed heartily and said to Lew, "Mio marito si chiama Pasquale, e lui e veramente buono." (My husband's name is Pasquale, and he is good indeed.) Bernice now knows that Easter is Pasqua, not Pasquale, but mistakes such as these are good fun and make for unforgettable language lessons.

VIGNETTES: THE BIRTH OF 'LA VIGNA'

BILANCIOS & CHIANESES

by Angelo Chianese

I thought I would die in Casandrino. We had arrived two days earlier, my nana, Assunta, and I. We had walked from where the bus left us--the small town of Frattemaggiore--through the even smaller town of Grumo to Nana's home town (which she hadn't seen since the age of 21) of Casandrino. I was 31 years old now. Nana was 81. My mom had died a year earlier and I took 3 weeks off from work to make a trip to Italy with this great lady whom I had known, and who loved me unconditionally, all my life. We could finally speak the same language (three years in the college classroom and two in Italy had finally sunk in) and my Mom's early death reminded, or perhaps taught me, that time was an invisible, incomprehensible, unstoppable phenomenon. It was time to return the gift of love and teaching and guidance to Nana. I would handle the travel, accommodations, sight-seeing arrangements; Nana would move her magnificent self through the streets, feelings and memories of her homeland. We were a perfect couple--she, using my youth and recent Italian experience as an index to current realities; I, using her wisdom, calm and preferences as an indicator for our itinerary, and as a wonderful model for seeing newly, for enjoyment.

We had spent the entire first week in Rome, actually, mostly in Vatican City. We shared an inexpensive room a stone's throw from St. Peter's Cathedral, walked there day after day to bask in the sun along the way, the grandeur of the immense vaulted basilica, the specialness of the Mass celebrated in the bosom of Catholicism. Side-trips to the Colosseum, to Rome's central cemetery, to the ruins of ancient Rome. Not many side-trips. Meals, walks and conversations with the local people dominated the days of our first week's visit--that and an average of maybe three Masses a day at the Basilica. And, oh yes, a special visit to Pope Paul VI somewhere in between.

Once in Casandrino, my job, as I saw it, was to make sure we were well-accommodated, well-nurtured, and that nobody wore Nana out with too much anything. Nothing to worry about. The two or three dozen long-lost relatives (most of them children, grandchildren or in-laws of her sister, Francesca) were in their glory, welcoming their never-seen aunt as warmly as if they'd known her all their lives. They could not get over her striking

resemblance to their mother/grandmother.

We walked, we talked, we visited, we reminisced; we laughed, she cried, we learned, we prayed. Around the third day there I got sick. Probably a little "raffredorer" (a cold), I thought. Within hours I had chills, vomiting and a 103 fever. My body was fighting for its life. Literally. There had been, prior to our arrival in Italy, a cholera epidemic--centered in Naples. We'd been a day in Naples before arriving here. I fought the idea of it, but by the second day of my violent illness, I was convinced I'd "lasciare la pelle" (leave the show)--by dying--here in my grandparents' hometown. "How appropriate," something in me remembers thinking, and premature!

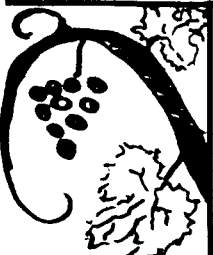
Convinced, finally, that I was going to have to get myself out of this jam (no doctor, nurse or professional had been summoned--just tea, bread and soup administered) I managed to write a note in English, since I had decided it would be embarrassing to my hosts if they knew how I was really feeling, explaining that I needed a doctor, quickly, that money was not a question, that I was in Luigi Frascogna's home, that I didn't have a lot of time on my side, that, in short, I needed HELP!

I got one of the children to run the note down to a gentleman whose guest for supper Nana and I had been and who, after making his fortune in America in the liquor store business, had decided to return to his hometown of Casandrino to live out his older years: Frank Bilancio. Delirium was a part of what followed and I don't recall if it was an hour or a day later that an angel from heaven arrived to take my pulse, my temperature, to inject healing fluids into my backside and to leave instructions to continue the injections for 2-3 more days with a woman trained in needle-giving, "la siringara". This angel's name was Dr. Maria Bilancio.

Seems the Bilancios and Chianeses are fated to help pull each other through the bad ones from time to time--perhaps so that they can continue to enjoy the very wonderful times together, no?



We announced Julianne Wiesner-Chianese's birth in February's LA VIGNA. Her she is with (top row) Uncle Chris, Aunt Elaine, Grandfather Anthony, Mother Bobbi, and (bottom) Aunt Lilia, Uncle Mick, Father Angelo



LA CUCINATHIS MONTH: EASTER WHEAT PIE

"La Cucina" has a happy double meaning --it can mean "cuisine" or "kitchen". In **La Vigna**, "La Cucina" means both cuisine and kitchen, in a regular column featuring favorite family recipes. (**Send yours!**)

The warmth of the hearth is the center of the home, and food prepared there brings pleasure as well as nourishment.

No one believed more in the joy of preparing and sharing good food than Lou Bilancio. This recipe for "wheat pie" had become a traditional favorite--every Easter he baked many to serve and give as gifts.

The whole wheat berries called for are available in health food stores such as the Whole Earth Center in Princeton. The recipe is from the Polly-O Recipe Book.

Let us know your results. **Bon appetito!**

PASTIERA DI GRANOFILLING:

1/2 lb. soaked wheat, drained
(this is the weight after
soaking)
1/2 cup hot (scalded) milk
1 teaspoon salt
1 teaspoon sugar
1 1/2 lbs. POLLY-O Ricotta
1 1/2 cups sugar
6 egg yolks, beaten
dash of cinnamon (optional)
grated rind of one lemon
1 or 2 tablespoons orange flower
water or 1/2 teaspoon orange
extract
1/4 cup, each, minced glaze' citron
and orange peel
4 egg whites, beaten stiff
1 teaspoon vanilla

PASTA FROLLA (FLAKY SWEETPASTRY):

2 cups sifted flour
1/2 cup sugar
pinch of salt
1/4 cup POLLY-O Butter
3 egg yolks
1 tablespoon milk

PREPARE WHEAT: Drain soaked wheat, cover with 3 cups of fresh water, add 1 teaspoon salt and boil for 1 hour in a covered saucepan, stirring frequently to prevent sticking. Drain water, add 1/2 cup scalded milk, 1 teaspoon sugar, and boil for additional five minutes. Remove from heat, add citron and orange peel; mix and allow to cool. (If soaked wheat is not readily available, dry wheat may be soaked as follows: cover dry wheat with cold water and boil for 15 minutes or until the husks crack open. Remove from heat and allow to soak for 24 hours. Then prepare soaked wheat as above.) While prepared wheat is cooling, PREPARE PASTA FROLLA: sift flour, salt, and sugar into a bowl; cut in butter with a pastry blender or with finger tips, to distribute the butter evenly through the flour. Stir in egg yolks one at a time, mixing with a wooden spoon. Work with hands until dough is manageable and clears the bowl, adding a little milk, if necessary, to hold together. Turn onto a lightly floured board and knead quickly until smooth. Form into a ball and chill for 30 minutes. Then divide ball into two parts, one larger than the other. Roll large piece on lightly floured board into a large disc, 1/8 inch thick, large enough to line a deep 10-inch pie plate. Butter pie plate and line with pastry, leaving a 1/2-inch overhang. Roll out the smaller piece of dough 1/8 inch thick and cut into 3/4 inch strips, for lattice work topping. PREPARE FILLING: Beat ricotta and sugar together, adding 6 beaten egg yolks, vanilla, cinnamon, lemon rind and orange water, blending well. Stir in prepared wheat and fold in egg whites. Turn into pie shell; arrange strips criss-cross over filling, to edge roll bottom overhang up over strips at edge and flute heavily. Bake in a preheated moderate 350°F. oven for about 1 hour, or until firm in center and crust nicely browned. Let cool in oven. Serve sprinkled with confectioners' sugar. VARIATION substitute Pearl Tapioca for wheat. Follow soaking directions on Pearl Tapioca package; and then drain, add 1 pint scalded milk, pinch of salt, teaspoon of sugar and peel of 1 lemon. Cook over a moderate heat until Tapioca has thoroughly absorbed the milk. Remove lemon peel, turn into a bowl, add citron and orange peel, mix and allow to cool. Then proceed with preparation of Pasta Frolla.

LA VIGNA

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